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6/26/03

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a rejected base claim and were said to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Applicants respectfully submit that rewriting these claims is not required in view of the amendments set forth herein to the claims from which claims 2, 3 and 5-9 depend.

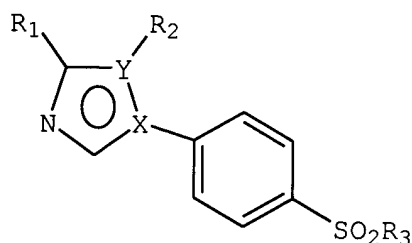
Applicants respectfully submit that in view of the foregoing amendments, all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is solicited.

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Attachment: Marked up copy of amendments

Marked Up Copy of Amended Claims:

1. (Amended) A compound of formula I:



I

wherein:

one of X or Y represents N and the other represents C;

R₁ represents hydrogen, methyl, halogen, cyano, nitro, -CHO, -COCH₃ or -COOR₄;

R₂ represents aryl or heteroaryl ~~optionally-unsubstituted or~~ substituted with one or more groups independently selected from halogen, C₁₋₈ alkyl, C₁₋₈ haloalkyl, R₄OC₀₋₈ alkyl, R₄SC₀₋₈ alkyl, cyano, nitro, -NR₄R₆, -NR₄SO₂R₅, -SOR₅, -SO₂R₅, -SO₂NR₄R₆, or -CONR₄R₆;

R₃ represents C₁₋₈ alkyl, C₁₋₈ haloalkyl or -NR₄R₆;

R₄ represents hydrogen, C₁₋₈ alkyl, or arylC₀₋₈ alkyl (where the aryl group can be ~~optionally-unsubstituted or~~ substituted with one or more groups selected from C₁₋₈ alkyl, halogen, C₁₋₈ haloalkyl, cyano, nitro, R₇OC₀₋₈ alkyl, R₇SC₀₋₈ alkyl, -NR₇R₈, -NR₇COR₅, -COR₇ or -COOR₇);

R₅ represents C₁₋₈ alkyl or C₁₋₈ haloalkyl;

R₆ represents hydrogen, C₁₋₈ alkyl, arylC₁₋₈ alkyl (where the aryl group can be ~~optionally-unsubstituted or~~ substituted with one or more groups selected from C₁₋₈ alkyl, halogen, C₁₋₈ haloalkyl,

cyano, nitro, R_7OC_{0-8} alkyl, R_7SC_{0-8} alkyl, $-NR_7R_8$, $-NR_7COR_5$, $-COR_7$ or $-COOR_7$), $-COR_8$ or $-COOR_8$;

R_7 represents hydrogen, C_{1-8} alkyl or benzyl;

R_8 represents C_{1-8} alkyl or C_{1-8} haloalkyl;

aryl in the above definitions represents phenyl or naphthyl; and

heteroaryl in the above definitions represents pyridine, pyrazine, pyrimidine or pyridazine, which can be optionally fused to a benzene ring;

~~and their~~ salts, solvates or prodrugs thereof.

4. (Amended) A compound according to claim 1 wherein R_2 represents phenyl or pyridine ~~optionally unsubstituted or~~ substituted with one or more groups independently selected from halogen, C_{1-8} alkyl, C_{1-8} haloalkyl, R_4OC_{0-8} alkyl, R_4SC_{0-8} alkyl, cyano, nitro, $-NR_4R_6$, $-NR_4SO_2R_5$, $-SOR_5$, $-SO_2R_5$, $-SO_2NR_4R_6$, or $-CONR_4R_6$.

10. (Amended) A compound according to claim 9 wherein R_2 represents phenyl or pyridine ~~optionally unsubstituted or~~ substituted with one or more groups independently selected from halogen, C_{1-8} alkyl, C_{1-8} haloalkyl, R_4OC_{0-8} alkyl, R_4SC_{0-8} alkyl, cyano, nitro, $-NR_4R_6$, $-NR_4SO_2R_5$, $-SOR_5$, $-SO_2R_5$, $-SO_2NR_4R_6$, or $-CONR_4R_6$.

11. (Amended) A compound according to claim 1 selected from:

5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;

5-(4-methylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;

5-(2,4-difluorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;

1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-5-phenylimidazole;

5-(3,4-dichlorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;.

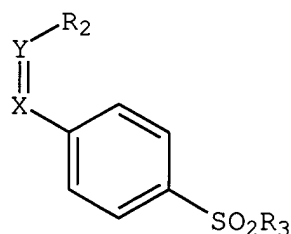
5-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(3-fluorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(3-fluoro-4-methylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(2-fluorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-5-(4-trifluoromethoxyphenyl)imidazole;
5-(6-methyl-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(2-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(3-chloro-4-methylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(3-methoxy-4-methylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(4-chlorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(6-chloro-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(2,6-dichloro-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(2-chloro-6-methoxy-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(5,6-dichloro-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-5-(4-propoxyphenyl)imidazole;
5-(3,5-diethoxyphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-5-(4-nitrophenyl)imidazole;
5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(4-ethylsulfonylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(4-dimethylaminophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
1-(4-fluorophenyl)-5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(4-fluorophenyl)-4-methyl-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(4-methylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(2,4-difluorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-5-phenylimidazole;

4-chloro-5-(3,4-dichlorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(3-fluorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(2-fluorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-5-(4-trifluoromethoxyphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(6-methyl-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(2-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(3-chloro-4-methylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(3-methoxy-4-methylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(4-chlorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(6-chloro-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(2,6-dichloro-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(2-chloro-6-methoxy-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(5,6-dichloro-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-5-(4-propoxyphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(3,5-diethoxyphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;

4-chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-5-(4-nitrophenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(4-ethylsulfonylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(6-ethoxy-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-bromo-5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
1-(4-fluorophenyl)-2-methyl-5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
2-chloro-1-(4-fluorophenyl)-5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
1-(4-fluorophenyl)-5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazol-2-carboxaldehyde;
methyl 1-(4-fluorophenyl)-5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazol-2-carboxylate;
2-bromo-1-(4-fluorophenyl)-5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
1-(4-fluorophenyl)-5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazol-2-carbonitrile;
2-chloro-5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)-1-phenylimidazole;
2-chloro-1-(4-methylphenyl)-5-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-[4-chloro-5-(4-fluorophenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide;
4-(4-chloro-5-phenylimidazol-1-yl)benzenesulfonamide;
4-[4-chloro-5-(3,4-dichlorophenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide;
4-[4-chloro-5-(4-methylphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide;
4-[4-chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide;
4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide;
4-[4-chloro-5-(6-chloro-3-pyridyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide;
4-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide;

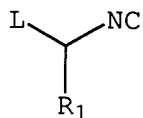
5-(4-aminophenyl)-4-chloro-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(6-ethoxy-3-pyridyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(4-dimethylaminophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(3-chloro-4-dimethylaminophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
4-chloro-5-(3-chloro-4-dimethylaminophenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(4-acetylaminophenyl)-4-chloro-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(4-ethylsulfinylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
5-(4-ethylsulfonylphenyl)-1-(4-methylsulfonylphenyl)imidazole;
~~or a salt, solvate or prodrug thereof a salt thereof;~~
a solvate thereof; and
a prodrug thereof.

12. (Amended) A process for preparing a compound of formula I according to claim 1 which comprises:
(a) when in a compound of formula I R_1 represents hydrogen or methyl, reacting an imine of formula II



II

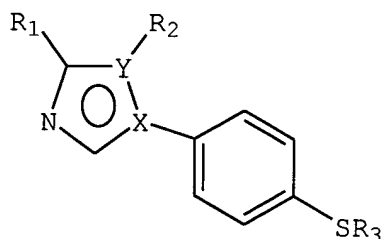
wherein X, Y, R₂ and R₃ are as defined in claim 1, with an isocyanide of formula III



III

wherein R₁ represents hydrogen or methyl and L represents a good leaving group; or

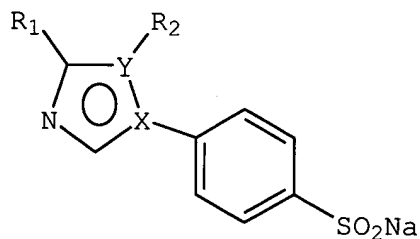
(b) when in a compound of formula I R₃ represents C₁₋₈ alkyl or C₁₋₈ haloalkyl, oxidizing a thioether of formula VIII,



VIII

wherein R₃ represents C₁₋₈ alkyl or C₁₋₈ haloalkyl and X, Y, R₁ and R₂ are as defined in claim 1, with ~~a suitable an~~ oxidizing agent; or

(c) when in a compound of formula I R₃ represents -NH₂, reacting a compound of formula IX



IX